

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 TRSE-00 XMB-04 OPIC-06

SP-02 CIEP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6505

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FJ, US

SUBJECT: FINANCIAL TIMES ARTICLE ON BANABANS IN FIJI

1. FINANCIAL TIMES OF OCTOBER 8 HAD LENGTHY ARTICLE ON BANABANS BY DAVID LASCELLES, RECENTLY IN FIJI. ARTICLE REVIEWS BANABANS' CASE ON PHOSPHATE REVENUES, AND STATES, "INTERNATIONAL PUBLICITY AND SUPPORT FOR THE BANABANS IS WORRYING FOR THE GILBERTS GOVERNMENT ON TARAWA ISLAND. IF THE WORST HAPPENED, THE GILBERTS COULD BE CUT OFF FROM THEIR PHOSPHATE REVENUES. AND THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE ELSE EXCEPT FISH AND COPRA". TARAWA HAS HIRED PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANTS TO REBUT BANABAN ARGUMENTS AND HAS RENEGOTIATED THE SHARE-OUT OF PHOSPHATE REVENUES SO THAT THE BANABANS NOW GET HALF.

2. LASCELLES CONTINUES THAT SINCE OCEAN ISLAND CANNOT SUSTAIN A VIABLE COMMUNITY, BANABANS' FUTURE MUST LIE IN RAMBI ISLAND IN FIJI WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN RESETTLED. HOWEVER, THEY HAVE NOT HANDLED THEIR WEALTH OR COMMERCIAL AFFAIRS WISELY IN FIJI, AND "IT NOW SEEMS THAT IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC AT LEAST, THE TIDE OF PUBLIC

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OPINION IS BEGINNING TO SWING AWAY FROM THE BANABANS,

LARGELY BECAUSE OF THEIR EXTRAVAGANT BEHAVIOR". FIJI PRIME MINISTER RATU MARA, RECENTLY DISCUSSED SITUATION WITH GORONWY-ROBERTS OF FCO, AND "IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY AGREED THAT FURTHER FRAGMENTATION OF STATES WAS UNDESIRABLE". THE FCO IS LIKELY TO RECEIVE A BANABAN DEPUTATION "THIS MONTH".

3. COPIES OF ARTICLE POUCHED TO USUN FOR AMBASSADOR BENNETT, AND TO EA/ANP FOR FILI DESK.

ARMSTRONG

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Message Attributes

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